

Series: God & Our Culture #1535

Title: 1 Corinthians 6.9-11
Former Homosexuals

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. We have been looking at passages in the Bible that address homosexuality as a central part of our discussion on same-sex "marriage." Today I want to ask and answer this question: is it possible for a homosexual person to change? Is it possible for a same-sex marriage to end, with one or more of the partners confessing their homosexuality as sin and to be set free from that sin by Jesus Christ?

Let me show you how the Bible answers this question by turning to 1 Corinthians chapter 6, verses 9-11. This is the Apostle Paul's first letter to the church at ancient Corinth. Homosexuality was widely practiced in Corinth. Listen to what he writes. 1 Corinthians 6 beginning in verse 9, "**Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.¹¹ Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.**"

In verse 9 the Apostle makes it very clear that the effeminate (transvestites, men dressed as women), the effeminate *and* homosexuals are *unrighteous* and they will *not* inherit the kingdom of God. He says, "Do not be deceived." This verse supports what we learned in the Old Testament and from Jesus in the Gospels and Paul in Romans 1. Homosexuality is sin. The effeminate and the homosexuals, just like fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, drunkards, etc. must be forgiven of their sin by Jesus *if* they are going to inherit the kingdom of God. Otherwise, separate and apart from Christ's righteousness applied to them, they will not live forever in fellowship with God.

So, when a homosexual person comes under the conviction of the Holy Spirit that his or her lifestyle is sin, is it possible for this person to change? Listen again to verse 11. Paul states, "Such were some of you..." That's written in the past tense. *Were*. Past tense! Meaning, you are no longer a homosexual. Friends, the Corinthian church was full of people who *were* homosexual, effeminate, and all the other sins covered here. *But* these people are *no longer* practicing such sins. Is change possible? Oh yes, it is! Why? Let me quote Jesus, "**With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.**"

No person, no matter our sin, can save ourselves. None of us on our own merit can put our sin behind us. But when God sovereignly decides to save a person, to set a homosexual free of their sin, with God all things are possible. And each one of our churches should absolutely include some who *were* (past tense) effeminate and who *were* (past tense) homosexual and who *were* (past tense) lesbians. And how do we know when there is genuine repentance and salvation for these sins? Listen to Paul in verse 11. He continues with three realities in the lives of all who are genuine Christian people.

And he begins each one with the strongest Greek adversative particle "but." He writes, "But you were washed..." This is regeneration, the new birth; what Jesus calls being born again. 2 Corinthians 5, verse 17 captures this, "**Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.**" Yes! Former homosexuals now have new life in Christ! Does that mean the urge for gay sex automatically disappears? In most cases, no. But just as we heterosexuals have to battle lust and our sensual appetites in the power of the Holy Spirit, so too former homosexuals and lesbians will do the same in the power of God. They will learn to be overcomers.

Second, Paul says, "But you were sanctified..." Sanctification describes the life-long process all Christians go through of becoming more like Christ; of being made holy as God is holy. This describes new behavior. Instead of living the gay lifestyle, these sanctified men and women will live completely different. As Paul wrote to the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 4, verse 3, "**For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality...**"

And then third, Paul writes, “But you were justified...” Ah, justification. This great doctrine and I am going to be so short and to the point. To be justified before God is the great gift of salvation. When the righteousness of Christ is applied to the sinner, then and only then can we live in right relationship to holy God, only then do we have standing before Him. Listen to Galatians 2, verse 16, “**a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus...**” Every sinner who will put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will be saved and will be justified before God. This is what we call justification by faith alone. And these Corinthian Christians *were* homosexuals, but when they believed in Christ God wiped away their sins and justified them before Him.

So, you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified. And notice: “in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.” These are powerful, powerful statements about what Christ has done for these former, these ex-homosexuals. And friends, this is not only was possible in Corinth, but this *is* possible wherever you live. Is it possible for a sinner to change? With God, *yes!* Apart from God? *No!* But be very encouraged, God is still saving sinners. He still washes, sanctifies, and justifies.

Earlier in this series I mentioned a woman named Rosario Butterfield. She *was* a prominent lesbian, and an accomplished professor of English and woman’s studies at Syracuse University. Her primary academic field was critical theory, specializing in queer theory. She advised the LGBTQ+ student group, wrote Syracuse University’s policy for same-sex couples, and actively lobbied for LGBTQ+ aims alongside her lesbian partner. *Until*, God transformed her life and she was washed, sanctified, and justified by Jesus Christ. Now, she is married to Kent, a pastor, and she’s a home school mother, author, and speaker.

I invite you to read her compelling testimony in her book *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert*. Her name is Rosario Butterfield and the book is *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert*. Or, if you are not much of a reader, visit You Tube and search for her testimony. Just Google Rosario Butterfield’s testimony. If you want, I can happily send you the link if you email me and ask for it. mark@godisministry.org, that’s m-a-r-k@godisministry.org. This will be particularly helpful to you if you are discouraged that people you witness to and pray for are not open to the gospel, and/or you have someone you love who is homosexual and you have lost hope he or she will ever change *or* even can change. But all of us will benefit immensely by reading Rosario Butterfield’s *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert* and/or by watching her testimony. Here’s a link since you are reading along: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eykv-3hvFvI>

Our question has been asked and answered by the Scripture and by the many testimonies of what God is doing to draw homosexuals, as well as all sinners, to Christ. And this concludes what we have time to say about same-sex marriage. And this concludes our entire series on God and Our Culture. Fifty episodes have covered the environment, evolution, gender/sex, and marriage. Our foundational text was Genesis 1, 2, and 3. And I submit all of this to you, praying fervently God is speaking to *you*.

If you want to listen to this again, or you missed parts and want to hear them, simply visit our website: godisministry.org, that’s godisministry.org and click the series link marked God and Our Culture. All fifty (5-0) all fifty episodes are there for you. And do share these with others.

How often in this series I have felt what Paul expressed in 1 Timothy 1, “**Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.**” I remind you that I am a sinner, chief sinner among you all. I pray I have spoken humbly, aware of my own sin, even as I encouraged you to give up your sin. I am a sinner but I am a sinner saved by God’s grace. And I hope this also describes you.

Join us next time when we will continue to discover who God Is!

---END---